

Appendix C
Rec'd 12/12/69 1600

11 December 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: COINS Project Manager

SUBJECT : Request for an On Line Index to CIA Reports

REFERENCE : COINS/307-69, Index to Reports Published in the U.S. Intelligence Community, 30 October 1969

1. Your reference memorandum requests that each COINS participating agency determine whether it can make available an index to its end product for on-line accessing via the COINS network. The type of index recommended is comparable to the shallow indexing system employed by CIA's Central Reference Service (CRS). The CRS system has been in operation for two years and it covers the bulk of the raw and finished product of the intelligence community, including the hard copy output of NSA. The CRS system is processed off-line on an IBM 360/50 computer.

2. I have requested that Agency management determine whether a subset of the CRS index (AEGIS) could be made available to COINS. I believe that it would be more practical and useful to make a portion of this system available on-line than to solicit several incomplete indexes from various COINS participating agencies.

3. Initial CIA reaction to my proposal is favorable, but I have been advised that CIA should test the AEGIS system on-line in house before making it available to the community. The average length of a CRS index record is 280 characters - approximately 300,000 items are indexed annually which fall within the Top Secret SI COINS security restriction. Some CIA authorities on the CRS system do not feel that an index of that size should be made available to the uninitiated user. They argue that one who has not been trained in the indexing input procedure will not understand the limitations and potential of the system and will ask imprecise questions

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which will generate a large amount of irrelevant output. I think this is a danger, particularly if a large volume of index records were initially made available. Therefore, we have extracted the portions of the file relating to Communist China and finished intelligence and by the first of the year we should be ready to run some test queries against these files. The CIA IHC member will keep the IHC and COINS management informed of the progress and results of this test.

4. If our test results indicate that a subset of the AEGIS file would be appropriate for COINS, then I would recommend that the initial file be limited to finished intelligence. This would give COINS an index of some 45,000 records at present. This would be a manageable data base of interest to a broad spectrum of users.

5. Further, if this index can be made available to COINS, I think it should be loaded on the DIA or NSA systems in view of CIA's limited participating hours. If this were done, other agency's could obtain maximum benefit from its use. I would of course provide file descriptions, reference aids, and training assistance as necessary to aid in the understanding and utilization of the index.

[redacted]
CIA COINS Subsystem Manager

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Distribution:

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2 - D/CRS
1 - C/IPS/OPPB
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